

MINUTES
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting
Helena Headquarters
1420 East 6th Avenue - Helena, MT 59620
CONFERENCE CALL

November 18, 2004

Commission Members Present: Dan Walker, Chairman; Tim Mulligan, Vice-Chairman; Mike Murphy. John Lane was unable to participate in the conference call, however he provided his proxy vote of approval of the season extension rule.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff: Chris Smith, Don Childress, Larry Peterman, Regena Peterson

Chairman Walker called the conference call meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Big Game Season Extension Criteria ARM – Final. Don Childress, FWP Wildlife Division Administrator, reminded the Commission that the approval of the Season Extension ARM at the November meeting was made one day before the comment period ended. That decision was contingent on the receipt of any comments by the due date. A single comment was received the last day of the comment period – the day after the Commission meeting. Today's conference call is to ensure the comment is considered in the decision made by the Commission.

The comment inquired who the regional committee participants consisted of and how decisions would be made. Childress said that overall, it was a letter of support. Response to the comment was included in the Administrative Rule that was forwarded to the Legal Division for submittal to the Secretary of State.

Action: Murphy moved and Mulligan seconded the motion to approve the Big Game Extension Criteria Administrative Rule. Motion carried. (John Lane stated via an earlier telephone conversation that he was in support of the rule).

Childress said the rule will not be published or valid until December 3, 2004, which leaves a time period between the season ending date and the effective date of the rule. The Regional Wildlife Managers are reviewing harvests as they occur. Data will be evaluated the fourth week of the season. If the regions recommend extensions, a conference call with the Commission will determine concurrence with their recommendations. Information will be provided as it comes in.

Childress said the seasons are liberal, yet harvest numbers are down. He said, for example, the Sun River quota is in the hundreds, and only 66 elk have been checked through.

Mulligan asked when the Department plans to announce the season extension to the public. Childress replied that news releases would be published prior to the end of the season. He added that the Department is already receiving calls asking if the season will be extended.

A final set of criteria will be sent to the Commissioners following this call.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Dan Walker, Chairman

M. Jeff Hagener, Director